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INFO RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
JAC MOLESWORTH RAF  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 003015

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SUBJECT: WANTED: LEADERSHIP AT DRC'S HELM

REF: KINSHASA 2653

CLASSIFIED BY: POLOFF EDWARD BESTIC FOR REASONS 1.5 B AND D

11. (C) SUMMARY: AFTER AN INITIAL BURST OF ACTIVITY, THE DRC'S TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS LOST MOMENTUM TOWARDS REUNIFYING THE COUNTRY. PRESIDENT KABILA IN PARTICULAR HAS FAILED TO ENERGIZE HIS CUMBERSOME GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE, BUT PARLIAMENT AND MINISTERS HAVE LIKEWISE FAILED THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE. FAILING TO BREAK THE LEADERSHIP LOGJAM COULD RESULT IN AN INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED SOLDIERY AND POPULACE, AND POSTPONED NATIONAL ELECTIONS. POST, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER KEY DIPLOMATIC ACTORS, IS WORKING TO JUMP-START JOSEPH KABILA AND HIS STALLING TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

STUCK AT FIRST BASE  
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12. (C) AFTER AN INITIAL BURST OF ACTIVITY--SWEARING-IN OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN JULY, INAUGURATION OF PARLIAMENT IN AUGUST, CREATION OF AN INTEGRATED MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE IN SEPTEMBER, AND APPOINTMENT OF MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS IN OCTOBER--THE DRC'S TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS SETTLED INTO A LAZY PATTERN OF DRIFT AND NEGLECT. THE COUNTRY IS STILL DIVIDED IN FACT, WITH EACH OF THE FORMER WARRING FACTIONS STILL EFFECTIVELY IN CONTROL OF "ITS" TERRITORY. THERE HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY NO ORGANIZED PROGRESS ON DEMOBILIZATION OF FORMER COMBATANTS OR UNIFICATION OF THE VARIOUS ARMIES. THE POLICE, INTELLIGENCE, IMMIGRATION, TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION, DIPLOMATIC SERVICES AND STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES ALL REMAIN UNINTEGRATED. APPARENTLY LULLED BY RECENT IMPROVEMENTS, ITURI HAS VIRTUALLY FALLEN OFF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT'S RADAR SCREEN.

13. (C) ENGROSSED IN SELF-ORGANIZATION, PARLIAMENT HAS ADOPTED ONLY TWO SETS OF MINOR LEGISLATION SINCE IT WAS INAUGURATED IN LATE AUGUST, NAMELY, THE 2003 BUDGET (COVERING ONLY THE LAST SIX WEEKS IN CY2003), AND A SERIES OF AGREEMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL LOANS. THE LIST OF KEY OUTSTANDING LEGISLATION IS LONG AND INCLUDES THE 2004 BUDGET PLUS LAWS ON THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, NATIONALITY, DECENTRALIZATION, POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE FIVE "CIVIL INSTITUTIONS." (NOTE: ACCORDING TO THE TRANSITIONAL CONSTITUTION, ORGANIC LAWS ON THE LATTER WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN ADOPTED WITHIN THE FIRST THIRTY DAYS OF PARLIAMENT. END NOTE.) KABILA'S DEPUTY CABINET DIRECTOR, GUILLAUME SAMBA KAPUTO, TOLD DCM 26 NOVEMBER THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD LIKELY HAVE A JANUARY RECESS. GIVEN THAT THE OVERALL PACE IN KINSHASA TENDS TO SLOW BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THIS MEANS THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD NOT REALLY BEGIN TO WORK AGAIN UNTIL FEBRUARY.

A LEADERSHIP VACUUM  
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14. (C) INSTEAD OF WORKING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, THE TOP POLITICAL LEADERS IN KINSHASA ARE MORE INTERESTED IN APPORTIONING BLAME FOR INERTIA. IN RECENT MEETINGS WITH THE AMBASSADOR, THREE OF THE FOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS EACH BLAMED OTHERS FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S INACTION. PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA, HABITUALLY SLOW TO MAKE DECISIONS, SHOWS FEW PUBLIC SIGNS OF INITIATIVE OR LEADERSHIP. HE MEETS WITH HIS FOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS ONLY SPORADICALLY; THERE IS LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THEM. SAMBA KAPUTO HIMSELF

TOLD DCM ON 26 NOVEMBER THAT THE CUMBERSOME 61-MEMBER COUNCIL OF MINISTERS RATHER THAN THE "PRESIDENCY" (KABILA AND HIS VP'S) IS SUPPOSED TO SERVE AS THE MAIN DECISION-MAKING BODY.

15. (C) THE INERTIA BEGINS AT THE TOP, BUT THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT THERE IS A MARKED LACK OF ENERGY AND ATTENTION TO THE IMMEDIATE ISSUES. FEW OFFICIALS APPEAR TO BE DEVOTING LONG HOURS TO THEIR WORK WHEN THEY ARE IN KINSHASA. KABILA HIMSELF CHOSE TO SPEND A FULL WEEK IN KATANGA IN MID-NOVEMBER, MEETING WITH LOCAL POLITICOS AND REPORTEDLY DRIVING HIS 4X4 HUNDREDS OF KILOMETERS TO PERSONALLY INSPECT ROAD CONDITIONS. OTHER OFFICIALS HAVE PREFERRED TO SPEND THEIR TIME TRAVELING ABROAD, INCLUDING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT OLIVIER KAMITATU, WHO RECENTLY SPENT TWO WEEKS IN EUROPE. ON 27 NOVEMBER THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT ON THE DAY OF 25 NOVEMBER, FIVE DIFFERENT CONGOLESE MINISTERS WERE IN PARIS.

TIME, PATIENCE WEARING THIN?

16. (C) ONE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT'S LEISURELY PACE IS AN INVOLUNTARY DISSEMINATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE PROVINCES, WHERE REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS ARE RUNNING AD-HOC DDR PROGRAMS AND SOME GOVERNORS ARE CONSOLIDATING THEIR FIEFDOMS. ANOTHER EFFECT OF FAILING TO MEET--OR AT LEAST MANAGE--PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS IS RISING LEVELS OF DISCONTENT AMONG THE POPULACE. THERE HAVE BEEN INITIAL SIGNS OF FRUSTRATION AMONG THE MOSTLY-UNPAID FOR SEVERAL DAYS RECENTLY, DUE TO NON-PAYMENT OF SALARIES. ELECTORAL PREPARATIONS--IN A MASSIVE COUNTRY WITH DEVASTATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND VIRTUALLY NO DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE--HAVE ALSO STALLED AT THE INITIAL PLANNING STAGE. THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY USED UP ALMOST A QUARTER OF ITS SELF-IMPOSED 24 MONTH DEADLINE FOR HOLDING NATIONAL ELECTIONS, RAISING THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT WILL EXTEND PAST TWO PERMISSIBLE SIX-MONTH EXTENSIONS INTO LEGAL NEVER-NEVER LAND.

GROUP INTERVENTION FOR DRC'S DYSFUNCTIONAL LEADERS

17. (C) THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT URGENTLY NEEDS TO FOCUS ON REGAINING ITS LOST MOMENTUM, AND JOSEPH KABILA NEEDS TO BE GOADED INTO ASSUMING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS HEAD OF STATE--A POSITION HE STRUGGLED TO ATTAIN. THE AMBASSADOR WILL PARTICIPATE IN A DECEMBER 2 MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION (CIAT), WHICH HAS A THREE-FOLD AGENDA: FIRST, TO REQUEST A MEETING WITH KABILA, THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, AND THE LEADERS OF PARLIAMENT, AND SHARE THE CIAT'S ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION WITH THEM; SECOND, TO URGE THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT TO GET BACK TO WORK; AND THIRD, TO PROPOSE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO REENERGIZE THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT SUCH AS SENDING MIXED OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS TO EASTERN CONGO, REMITTANCE OF REVENUES COLLECTED IN EX-REBEL TERRITORIES TO THE CENTRAL COFFER, AND ADOPTION OF A NATIONAL DEMOBILIZATION PLAN.

HOOKS